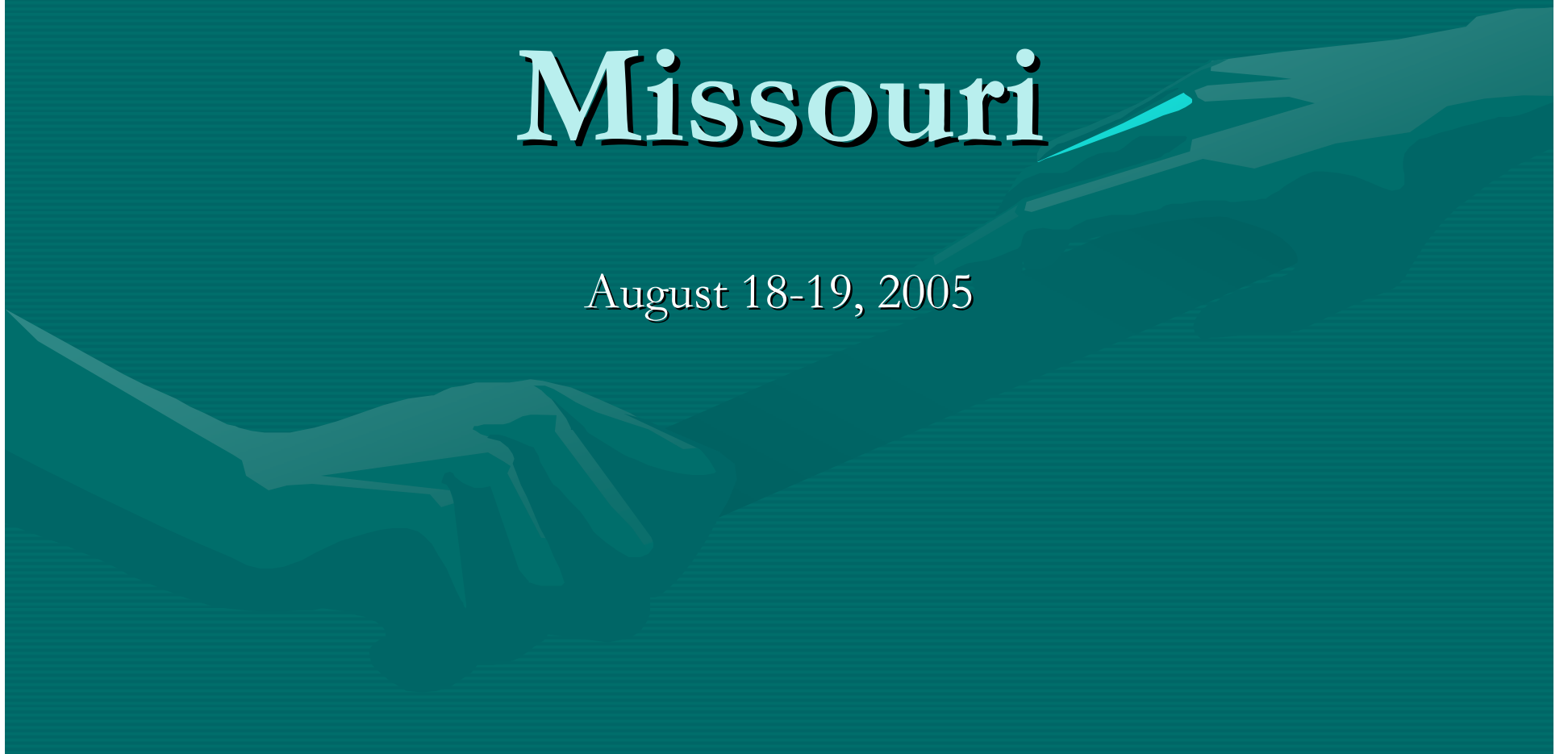


Missouri

August 18-19, 2005



Perspectives on State Use of Data for Policy Makers

or

A stylized, monochromatic illustration in shades of teal and dark teal. It depicts two hands shaking in a firm grip, symbolizing agreement or partnership. The hands are rendered with soft shading to give them a three-dimensional appearance. The background is a solid dark teal color.

How in the World Did We Get in this
Data Crunch?



Purpose

The background is a solid teal color. A faint, stylized illustration of two hands shaking is visible, rendered in a lighter shade of teal. The hands are positioned diagonally across the frame, with one hand on the left and the other on the right, meeting in the center.

Attempt to get everyone on the same
page

Organization

- Context
- General Principles for Data Utilization and Interpretation
- Overall Observations Concerning Missouri's APR
- Moving from the APR to the SPP

General Context

- Focus upon accountability and reporting
- Special education accountability for years was largely controlled by the parents and the IEP team
- Current accountability relies heavily upon standardized testing
- Testing for accountability has moved from an emphasis on general populations to groups of students and individual students
- Much discussion of special education/ accountability issues has focused upon statistical adjustments

Data Mandates and Control

		Mandate	
		Local	State/Federal
Control	Local		
	State/Federal		

Some Recent Related Policy Directions and Activities in Special Education

- Historically, much administrative data collected
- 1997 re-authorization of IDEA required states to develop state level goals and objectives
- Inclusion/alternate assessment
- State Improvement Grants (needs assessment)
- State Enhancement Grants (evaluative data)

Some Recent Related Policy Directions and Activities in Special Education (Continued...)

- State planning and improvement
- Most new grant applications linked to NCLB
- Annual Performance Reports (APR)
- State Performance Plans (SPP)

General Principles for Data Utilization and Interpretation

The background is a solid teal color. Faintly visible in the lower half is a stylized, semi-transparent image of two hands shaking, symbolizing agreement or partnership. The hands are rendered in a lighter shade of teal, creating a subtle watermark effect.

Interpreting Data

- Establish a spirit of trust (What is the problem?)
- The major task of data interpretation is converting data to information
- Data collection, utilization, and interpretation are not about statistics. They are about getting good, usable information to identify needs and strengths
- Compliance deals with pre-established standards. Other data deal with comparisons with norms, expectations, and judgments.

Interpreting Data (Continued...)

- The role of professional judgment should not be downplayed. Data are a tool. In the hands of the right people, they are a good tool.
- Rely more on trends than on a specific data point.
- All public reporting of data should effectively communicate to a broad audience.
- Additional data needs will usually arise (Control yourself)

Characteristics of Data

- Three levels of data
 - Mandatory Reporting
 - Mandatory Improvement
 - Improvement
- No data are perfect. Reporting should identify limitations in the data.

Additional Special Considerations

- Numbers
- Distribution of Disabilities



Unofficial Reaction to Missouri's APR

- Generally, I think that this report is well done. It is well written, data are appropriately analyzed and interpretations seem fair and even handed
- I was especially impressed with the treatment of the personnel data
- The pre-school screening approach and the use of a common measure to look at kindergarten entry behaviors seems to have good promise

Unofficial Reaction to Missouri's APR (Continued...)

- In cases where statistical sampling was involved, details were limited and the impact of sampling on results could not be determined
- There was confusion about what a target is
- It is not possible from this report to tell how ready Missouri is (organizationally or technically) to move to the performance plan

The background is a solid teal color. A faint, stylized graphic of two hands shaking is visible in the lower half of the image, rendered in a lighter shade of teal. The text is centered in the upper half.

Get Training on Interpreting Data

General OSEP Themes for SPP and APR

- Timelines are tight but states are expected to deliver
- The emphasis is on improvement
- Data quality
- All data needs to be valid and reliable
- “This is what the data says, but the data is not good”. Will not be accepted

General OSEP Themes for SPP and APR (Continued...)

- Outcomes improvements center around the SPP and APR
- Broad stakeholder involvement
- Overall, the requests are not new. OSEP directions have been made law
- Comment: Missouri seems to be well-positioned to deal with SPP and future APR

Some Specific OSEP Emphases

- Public Reporting (local and state data every year)
- Sampling
- Measurable and rigorous targets
- **Definition:** Within the context of the State Performance Plan, measurable and rigorous targets are established with broad stakeholder input and specify the challenging levels of improved performance to be reached within a particular timeframe.

Some Specific OSEP Emphases (Continued...)

- Broad stakeholder involvement includes State Advisory Panels
- Statute calls for challenging targets that are realistic but a stretch
- A useful acronym: SMA(bc)RT
 - S: Specific
 - M: Measurable
 - A: Achievable, but challenging
 - R: Relevant
 - T: Timed

Some Specific OSEP Emphases (Continued...)

- **An Additional Perspective:** Effective targets need to be real but challenging...targets that are too difficult debilitate rather than motivate and those that are too easy often lead to complacency.